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A CURIOUS
LETTER
FROM A
GENTLEMAN
TO
Mr. WHITEFIELD,

Wherein he proves,

That *Mr.* WHITEFIELD knows much less of
Christianity than either Archbishop TIL-
LOTSON, or the AUTHOR of the *Whole*
Duty of Man.

WITH
REMARKS.

By *AQUILA SMYTH*,
Layman of the CHURCH of *England.*

LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOR, and are to be had at his
House within two Doors of Cripplegate, London-
Wall. MDCCXL.

(Price Two-Pence.)

1850

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FROM

GEN. L. B. ALLEN

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TO THE
READERS.

Gentlemen,

I HAD once the Pleasure of Reading to you the Defence of the *Whole Duty of Man*, from the false Charges of Mr. *W-----d*, Mr. *W-----ly*, and their Adherents; which as they are in no wise able to answer, nor indeed is there any Room for an Answer, they must take *Shame* to themselves, for such their false and unjust Accusations. I shall now take equally as great a Pleasure in Reading to you a Letter in Defence of that once most excellent Divine Archbishop *Tillotson*, whose

whose incomparable Works will be his
lasting Memorial, and yield Comfort
and Delight to all true *Christian* Souls
that carefully peruse them, and square
their Lives according to his Doctrine
and Directions.





A curious Letter from a Gentleman to Mr. WHITEFIELD, wherein he proves that Mr. WHITEFIELD knows much less of Christianity than either Archbishop *TILLOTSON*, or the AUTHOR of the *Whole Duty of Man*.

With REMARKS.

Rev. Sir,

TOuching your two Letters, which you have caused to be published in this Place, I am in no doubt what Spirit you were of, when you wrote them.

Not of a spirit of humility and meekness after the example of our blessed Saviour, and as becomes your character, but rather in the gall of bitterness, of a spirit of pride, malice and envy, detracting and depreciating the most valuable works of other men, on purpose to aggrandize yourself, and gain credit and reputation to your weak, nay impudent, nay wicked performances.

Had you observed common Decency or good Manners in them, you had then been only an Object of common Pity; but your contrary Behaviour exposes you to the utmost Scorn and Contempt of every Reader. *You know not, you say, how to give flattering Titles, in the Cause of God*; but you know how, pretending the Cause of God, to bring railing Accusations

fations (which an Archangel durst not do against the Devil) to support some Crochets you have got in your own Brains; how to insult and abuse the Memory and Writings of two of the most sound, pious and learned Authors, that ever adorned the *English* Church or Nation; and how to call God's Truth to witness the Falshood of the Gospel being a Covenant! You know how to do all this, and to dispense it to the Populace in a Vehicle of cant Terms; without Sense or Meaning. And if this be the Spirit of Methodism, *my Soul come not thou into their Secret.*

Here, you may behold the most consummate impudence that ever yet appeared in the whole *Christian* world; for, mov'd by his hot Enthusiastic brain, he absolutely denies that healing covenant of grace, which God himself, out of infinite love and compassion, was pleased to make with man; and which has since, well known to all, been ratified and confirmed by the coming and sufferings of *Jesus Christ*, and is fully contained in the Holy Gospel, to have an existence; or to be any covenant at all, or that God ever made any other covenant with man than the first covenant of works with *Adam*: DO THIS AND LIVE; TRANSGRESS AND DIE; but this erroneous opinion of his you may see more fully refuted in the Defence of the *Whole Duty of Man*; surely! this and such like apparently false and mad expressions, and that in public too, must need lower the credit of all other his novel doctrines, and render him ridiculous to all, but such as are as mad an Enthusiastic as himself.

But have you indeed vindicated your Assertion; that the Archbishop *Tillotson* knew no more of Christianity than *Mahomet*? Pray, how have you done it? Why, in a very suitable Manner, by advancing two other Assertions equally false and slanderous, and equally wanting a Vindication; viz. that the Archbishop knew of no other than a bare historical Faith; and that, as to the Method of our Acceptance with God thro' *Jesus Christ*, and our Justification by Faith alone, he was as ignorant as *Mahomet*.

Pray

Pray observe here how logically this very learned man argues? to prove that Archbishop Tillotson knew no more of Christianity than *Mahomet*, he tells you, Because he was as ignorant as *Mahomet*. *Fine reasoning indeed?*

Now (Sir) have you proved, or attempted to prove, that the Archbishop knew of no other than a bare historical Faith? No: Every Spiritual Man, you say, that reads his Discourses may see it. Did you take this on trust from your honour'd friend J. W? If you did, you must not lose your Reward. If you grounded it on your own Knowledge of those Discourses, how came this Passage of them in particular, beside many others, not to confound you? Vol. II. Fol. Serm. 52. *But then this Faith must not be a bare Assent and Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, but such an effectual Belief, as expresth itself in suitable Acts of Obedience and Holiness, such as the Apostle here calls a Faith which worketh by Love; a Faith that is inspir'd and acted, or rather consummate and made perfect by Charity, (for so the Word doth often signify) and then this Phrase will be just of the same Importance with that of St. James, by Works is Faith made perfect. ——— Remember (Sir) this Passage must look you full in the Face at the great Day.*

Is it possible for the faith of a *Christian* man, to be more fully, clearly, and more perfectly expressed than in these words of the most learned Archbishop? Is not this faith once delivered to the saints? Is not this the faith we justly contend for? Is not this the faith which all *Christian* believers have the privilege to plead? And is allowed by God himself, to supply the defect of full obedience; and so by virtue of that faith, *Christian* believers are admitted to life and immortality as if they were perfectly righteous. Where there no law of works, says the learned Mr. *Locke*, there could be no law of faith, for there could be no need of faith, which should be counted to men for righteousness, if there were no law to be the rule and measure of righteousness

ness, which men failed in their obedience to; the rule therefore of the covenant of works was never abolished, tho' the rigours were abated; the duties enjoined in it were duties still, their obligations never ceased; for this reason, and because, thro' the infirmities of our nature, we were not able to pay a perfect obedience, God of his infinite mercy and goodness freely gave us his well-beloved son to take our nature upon him, and to pay a perfect obedience, and fulfill the law for us, and so thro' faith in him, *i. e.* of his nativity, sufferings, and death, resurrection and ascension, and his sitting at the right hand of God making intercession for mankind, and a due repentance of our innumerable sins and transgressions of the law, God is pleased to accept us, as tho' we had fulfilled the law in every point.

This is the remedy which God himself out of infinite mercy has prescribed, and given to heal the breaches of a depraved nature. How dare you then, Sir, call this a *bare historical Faith*? What can you say for yourself? that you was deceived. Who deceived you, Dr. *Edwards*, or your honoured friend *J. W——ly*? Or rather was it not a juggle betwixt you and your honoured friend, to deceive your followers, in hopes of undetection and impunity, by condemning the works of two such invaluable authors, stripping one of his faith, and the other, as you call it, of his fundamentals, in order to prevent a more scrupulous enquiry into your own corrupt and abominable doctrines. But be that as it will, this I can fairly tell you, that you have fixed it so compleatly between you, in regard to these false and groundless charges, that whatever is truly said of one, will be justly believed of the other; and I appeal to the whole *Christian* world, if they do not each deserve the same punishment actually to be inflicted now, as tho' the Archbishop and the other unparallell'd Divine (an Archbishop too, so far as they can tell) were now both living, and in full strength; yet this great impostor and seducer of mankind has most audaciously threatened to come and bear public testimony against the false writings of our admired *Rabbies*; but it will be expected that he receives first the proper reward of the false testimony he has already delivered, of his lying and slander, of the *Standalum Magnatum*, of the spiritual rebellion, into which he has not only, thro' pride and arrogance, plunged himself, but many other unwary ones by his false arguments, and delusive speeches.

Have

Have you proved for certain the Archbishop knew no more of the Method of our Acceptance with God, &c. than *Mahomet*? Unfortunately then it turns out, that you have proved the same of your self also. The naughty Passage by which you have prov'd this of the Archbishop, you have interpolated. Restored, with the Interpolation 'twixt Hooks, it runs thus :

' You see then what it is, that must recommend
' us to the Favour of God ; the real Renovation of
' our Hearts and Lives, after the Image of him
' that created us. (*This must be repaired in us*) be-
' fore we can hope to be restored to the Grace and
' Favour of God, or to be capable of the Reward of
' Eternal Life. And what could God have done
' more reasonable, than to make these very things
' the Terms of our Salvation, which are the necessa-
' ry Causes and Means of it? How could he have
' dealt more mercifully and kindly with us, than to
' appoint that to be the Condition of our Happiness,
' which is the only Qualification that can make us ca-
' pable of it?

Had St. *Paul* been alive and read this passage, I am persuaded, says Mr. *W—d*, he would have pronounced an *Anathema* against him that wrote it; for what, says he, can be more contradictory to the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*; here is not a word mentioned about the all-sufficient, perfect and everlasting righteousness and death of *Jesus Christ*, as being the sole cause and condition of our being accepted by the father. Thus has he most impudently foisted in St. *Paul* to condemn the Archbishop for preaching up the very same doctrine of regeneration with himself, tho' not in the very same words.

Now (Sir) if this Passage proves that the Arch-
shop knew no more of the *Method of our Acceptance*,
&c. then what must these following Passages of
yours prove of you?

C

Whitefield's

Whitfield's Sermon on Regeneration, p. 14, 17. The Apostle declares it to be the irrevocable Decree of the Almighty, that without Holiness, i. e. without being made pure by Regeneration, and having the Image of God thereby re-instamp'd upon the Soul, no Man living shall see the Lord. And it is very observable, that our Divine Master, in the famous Passage before referred to, concerning the absolute Necessity of Regeneration, does not say, unless a Man be born again he shall not, but unless a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. For it is founded in the very Nature of Things, that unless we have Dispositions wrought in us suitable and answerable to the Objects that are to entertain us, we can take no Manner of Complacency or Satisfaction in them, &c. — Nay in one Place of Scripture, Sanctification is put before Justification on purpose, as it were to shew, that there is no Salvation to be had without it. But ye are washed, says the Apostle, but ye are sanctified, and then it follows, but ye are justified. — Another indisputable Argument why we must be new Creatures, viz. because without it Christ is dead in vain.

If St. Paul would pronounce an Anathema against the Archbishop on that naughty of his, how much more would he do so against you on these of your's!

‘ Here (in these Passages of your's) is not a Word about the All-sufficient, perfect and everlasting Righteousness and Death of Christ, as the sole Cause and Condition of our being accepted by the Father.’ (But what asserts the direct contrary, viz. that the Righteousness and Death of Christ are not All-sufficient as the sole Cause of our being accepted by the Father; but that without Regeneration, Christ is dead in vain.) ‘ Our Sanctification, which is the Effect and not the Cause of Christ's Righteousness being imputed to us, is here as elsewhere represented, as the sole Cause of our Justification and Salvation. So that’ (a monstrous Inference!) ‘ our Righteousness

‘teousness, which is but as filthy Rags, is here valued at so high a Price, as to be made to purchase, or which is the same, is made the Cause, of our enjoying Christ, and Heaven and Eternal Happiness? And what is this but Deism refined?’ No, Sir, I’ll tell you what it is; arrant Gibberish and Nonsense; and equally so applied to the Archbishop’s Passage or your own.

The Archbishop has asserted, *Regeneration*, or the *Image of God* being repaired in us, as a necessary Cause, that is instrumental Cause, and Means of our Salvation: And have not you asserted, that without this, *No Man shall see the Lord*; without it we cannot enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*; without it, *there is no Salvation*; and without it, *Christ is dead in vain*? The Archbishop has asserted it the *only Qualification*, that makes us capable of Happiness: And have not you asserted it as such, *founded on the very Nature of Things*. Or is the asserting it the *only Qualification* of our Happiness, representing it as the *sole Cause* of our Salvation? Lay your Hand upon your Heart (Sir) and say, whether the Archbishop has not asserted a *Supreme Cause* of that very *Qualification*! But above all; supposing the Archbishop and yourself from him, (for let even a Methodist say, whether on the Comparison, there be no Grounds to presume, that you had the chief Materials of your Discourse from his; especially from the Paragraphs next preceding (that you censure) had worded your Sentiments in such a manner, as to leave it doubtful, whether you meant *Regeneration* the *Sole Cause* of Justification and Salvation or no; yet how will this support your monstrous Inference,

‘So that our Righteousness, which is but as filthy Rags, is here valued at so high a Price, as to be made to purchase, or which is the same, is made the Cause of our enjoying Christ, and Heaven, and Eternal Happiness? And what is this but Deism

‘ refined?’ How long is it since you have made *Regeneration* or *Sanctification* (for you love dearly to shuffle among Terms.) **OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS?** Alas, my old Friend, whither is your poor Head now a wandering! &c.

Another instance of his profound logical head! For this inference (apparently to all that read it) is equally as false and groundless as his bold assertion of the Archbishop’s knowing of no other than *a bare historical Faith*, the contrary of which has been fairly proved beyond all dispute and contradiction. According to the doctrine of this brain-sick Enthusiast, all manner of righteousness and good works may be quite laid aside, since according to him they are fit for nought but the dunghill, and consequently can profit us nothing. If so, pray how came they so early and in the very beginning to be mistaken as to the value and esteem of righteousness, as to make it the most distinguishing character of *Abel*, and that he should be, and is called righteous *Abel* to this day? How came God himself in the Decalogue to promise a reward of long life, as a blessing to all those that paid due honour and obedience to their natural parents? How came the prophet *David*, a man after God’s own heart, to deceive us, and tell us, that God plenteously rewardeth the proud doer, or such as take pleasure and delight in well-doing? And how came another prophet to advise us, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God? The Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, according to this doctrine have taken much pains to little purpose, he might have saved himself the trouble of distinguishing between positive and negative justice, since they are equally useless and unprofitable; nothing being more right and justifiable, according to the doctrine and practice of this feeling saint, than to lead away captive silly women, and to rob and plunder, under religious pretences, both at home and abroad, which according to his own words, he has effected to some purpose indeed; this same letter containing in it something very extraordinary concerning the faith of this *sound* divine as to the things of this life. I must beg leave to repeat it; I had rather, says he, live by faith, and depend on God for the support of my present great, and yet increasing family, than to have the largest visible fund in the universe; but in a few lines lower you will perceive his

his faith begins to waver ; for tho' he declares his trust in God for the support of his Orphan-house in *Georgia*, yet he dares not to trust him upon the forks of *Delaware*, but as actually, as he says himself, taken up 5000 acres of good land, under a pretence of erecting a school for the education and maintenance of all such Negroes, whether young or old, that shall be sent unto him, old ones it seems he expects to beg, but young ones, he says, in the very next words, he intends to buy, and does not despair of seeing a room full of that despised generation, or rather in the fields, cultivating his lands, which when improved will yield him a more plentiful fortune than he could have gained in *Old England* by 5000 years preaching, the land (after the example of *Kingswood* school-house to Mr. *W—y*) being secured according to Mr. *Seward's* Journal, by a proper conveyance to his own dear self. But this way of digression, I must now return to the Scripture-encouragement of righteousness and good works ; if these are to be of no benefit to us towards salvation, how came our Blessed Saviour himself to begin his most excellent sermon on the mount, with the application of blessings to a variety of good works ? *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ; blessed are they that mourn, they that are meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they that are merciful, they that are pure in heart, the peace-makers, and they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ;* and how came he *ver. 20.* of the same chapter, to tell his Apostles, *that except their righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees they should in no case enter the kingdom of heaven ?* And how came St. *James*, chap. 2. *ver. 14.* to say, *What doth it profit my brethren, tho' a man say he hath faith, and have not works ?* and *ver. 26.* he says, *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* Thus you see righteousness and good works are recommended and encouraged throughout the whole tenour of the Scriptures from *Genesis* almost even to the *Revelations*, and yet this *experient'd* divine advises us to throw them all aside as filthy rags for the dunghill ; and for what ? not for the faith expressed by the much-abused Archbishop, which works by love ; but for such a weak and insufficient a faith as his own, which is so far from removing of mountains, that he has given it away as I have proved in exchange for land to support,
&c.

On

On the contrary, our good and gracious God is so far from discouraging the weakest endeavours of such as are sincerely desirous to please him, that many times he takes notice of a meer outside hypocritical service, so as to lay aside his wrath for the present, and reward it with temporal blessings, as appears from that well known case of *Ahab's* humiliation; God seems with a sort of joy to acquaint his prophet with it. *1 Kings 21. ver. 29. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself; I will not bring the evil in his days;* and imperfect goodness you see, goes not without a reward; and it is recorded of *Abijah* the son of *Jereboam*, that he alone of his seed should die a natural death, and have an honourable burial, because *1 Kings 14. ver. 13. In him there was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel;* this I must observe to you is not here mentioned to encourage any to content themselves with an hypocritical partial obedience; God forbid; but to take men off, from an opinion that it is to no purpose at all, to do something of their duty, if they don't do every thing; and to shew how kindly God receives even those that begin to look towards him; if a feigned repentance and obedience meet with some favour, we may be sure the least sincere endeavours will be favoured with a more abundant grace and blessing.

God hath promised, and doth continually afford the mighty assistances of his Holy Spirit to all those that humbly beg it of him, to strengthen them in every good work, and to join with, and second their faithful endeavours; he hath considered our infirmities and manifold temptations, maketh allowances for our wanderings and daily failings, and accepteth of sincerity instead of absolute perfection. We know that it is in vain for old sinners to expect to be transformed by the renovation of their minds and practices into new creatures in an instant; the Scripture represents sin as the disease and sickness of the soul, and a course of virtue as its healthful state; but does any man expect to recover from a chronical, lingering, inveterate disease, to a perfect state of health on a sudden? And it is just thus in the case of the soul, tho' a man may on a sudden be very wicked, yet no wicked man can be exemplarily good upon his first endeavours to be so; tho' our new pretenders to saintship, it seems, make the most infamous and prostitute, immediately upon the joining of them, from the greatest sinners immediately to become saints, all being such who are of their way, and all others reprobate;

reprobate ; and that the child of grace being once assured of salvation, never doubteth after ; but these men, their religion being yet in its infancy, have not fully agreed upon the principles they are to found their practice ; for, according to Mr. Seward's Journal, *Tuesday, May 13.* he says : ' Was exercised yesterday and this day with inward conflicts——my heart is so proud and stubborn that it requires severe trials to humble and break it. *Wednesday, May 14.* Was much exercised again with inward conflicts all this morning, and could not pray for my friends, but only sigh and groan before the Lord to get my proud and hard heart softened and broke——At length the Lord gave me freedom to unburden myself to brother G—— and then I eat and drank, which I could not do before, nor could I look before, upon any portion of Scripture but *Job's, David's, and Jeremiah's Lamentations*.' Now this Gentleman, according to Mr. *Whitefield*, was thoroughly regenerated, tho' his stubborn heart, as he calls it, held out and could not be brought to yield in less than six weeks time ; and yet, according to his own words, he seems to be fearful of a relapse, and as tho' a man might forfeit his right to grace, after he had once received it.

We know and are assured, that God doth not slight any weak attempts, but cherisheth the very first beginnings of virtue and goodness ; he doth not forsake us at our first refusal, but still stands at the door knocking, waiting our amendment ; he is always ready at hand to help and succour us under all temptations or discouragements that we may meet with in our *Christian* course.

But to sum up the whole, our Blessed Saviour's incarnation and perfect obedience even unto death is the sole meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, and of our salvation ; he alone purchased those great benefits for us, made atonement, paid our ransom, and procured this covenant of grace from God, wherein eternal life is promised to penitent sinners ; but then these great advantages are not immediately and absolutely conferred upon us, but under certain qualifications and conditions of repentance, faith, and sincere obedience ; for the performance of which the Holy Spirit is never wanting to sincere endeavours.

Hence it appears very plainly, that in the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* God Almighty, out of his infinite compassion to his degenerate creatures, hath prescribed such methods, appointed such means, given such examples, encouragements and assistances, that nothing can be thought
fit

fit and likely to promote the salvation of all men, but what his goodness and wisdom hath therein most abundantly supply us with, unless we would have him offer violence to the liberty of our will, and force us to be virtuous and happy whether we will or no; which would be to alter our natures, and make us another sort of creatures; but such care is taken, such provision is made for our happiness, that we have nothing left us but only the power of being miserable; if it be our resolved mind, (notwithstanding all possible obligations to the contrary) to be so. And who but a set of mad and frantic minds would ever have deserted a church where all the necessities to salvation are so constantly preached and practised, for the sake only of following some disgusted fiery zealots, who have withdrawn themselves from the Communion of the Church of *England* (notwithstanding their false charges and accusations) more for want of her preferments than her want of the principles and practices of Christianity.

I cannot better conclude than with part of that excellent Collect of our Church, *viz.*

MORE especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholick Church, that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Amen.

F I N I S.

